

## DOT OFFICE OF DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY AND COMPLIANCE NOTICE



Recently, some states passed initiatives to permit use of marijuana for so-called "recreational" purposes.

We have had several inquiries about whether these state initiatives will have an impact upon the Department of Transportation's longstanding regulation about the use of marijuana by safety-sensitive transportation employees – pilots, school bus drivers, truck drivers, train engineers, subway operators, aircraft maintenance personnel, transit fire-armed security personnel, ship captains, and pipeline emergency response personnel, among others.

We want to make it perfectly clear that the state initiatives will have no bearing on the Department of Transportation's regulated drug testing program. The Department of Transportation's Drug and Alcohol Testing Regulation – 49 CFR Part 40 – does not authorize the use of Schedule I drugs, including marijuana, for any reason.

Therefore, Medical Review Officers (MROs) will not verify a drug test as negative based upon learning that the employee used "recreational marijuana" when states have passed "recreational marijuana" initiatives.

We also firmly reiterate that an MRO will not verify a drug test negative based upon information that a physician recommended that the employee use "medical marijuana" when states have passed "medical marijuana" initiatives.

It is important to note that marijuana remains a drug listed in Schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act. It remains unacceptable for any safety-sensitive employee subject to drug testing under the Department of Transportation's drug testing regulations to use marijuana.

We want to assure the traveling public that our transportation system is the safest it can possibly be.

Jim L. Swart  
Director  
Office of the Secretary of Transportation  
Office of Drug and Alcohol Policy and Compliance  
Department of Transportation  
December 3, 2012

## DOT OFFICE OF DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY AND COMPLIANCE NOTICE



Recently, the Department of Justice (DOJ) issued guidelines for Federal prosecutors in states that have enacted laws authorizing the use of “medical marijuana.”

<http://www.justice.gov/opa/documents/medical-marijuana.pdf>.

We have had several inquiries about whether the DOJ advice to Federal prosecutors regarding pursuing criminal cases will have an impact upon the Department of Transportation’s longstanding regulation about the use of marijuana by safety-sensitive transportation employees – pilots, school bus drivers, truck drivers, train engineers, subway operators, aircraft maintenance personnel, transit fire-armed security personnel, ship captains, and pipeline emergency response personnel, among others.

We want to make it perfectly clear that the DOJ guidelines will have no bearing on the Department of Transportation’s regulated drug testing program. We will not change our regulated drug testing program based upon these guidelines to Federal prosecutors.

The Department of Transportation’s Drug and Alcohol Testing Regulation – 49 CFR Part 40, at 40.151(e) – does not authorize “medical marijuana” under a state law to be a valid medical explanation for a transportation employee’s positive drug test result.

That section states:

**§ 40.151 What are MROs prohibited from doing as part of the verification process?**

As an MRO, you are prohibited from doing the following as part of the verification process:

(e) You must not verify a test negative based on information that a physician recommended that the employee use a drug listed in Schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act. (e.g., under a state law that purports to authorize such recommendations, such as the “medical marijuana” laws that some states have adopted.)

Therefore, Medical Review Officers will not verify a drug test as negative based upon information that a physician recommended that the employee use “medical marijuana.” Please note that marijuana remains a drug listed in Schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act. It remains unacceptable for any safety-sensitive employee subject to drug testing under the Department of Transportation’s drug testing regulations to use marijuana.

We want to assure the traveling public that our transportation system is the safest it can possibly be.

Jim L. Swart

Director

Office of the Secretary of Transportation

Office of Drug and Alcohol

Policy and Compliance

Department of Transportation

October 22, 2009